

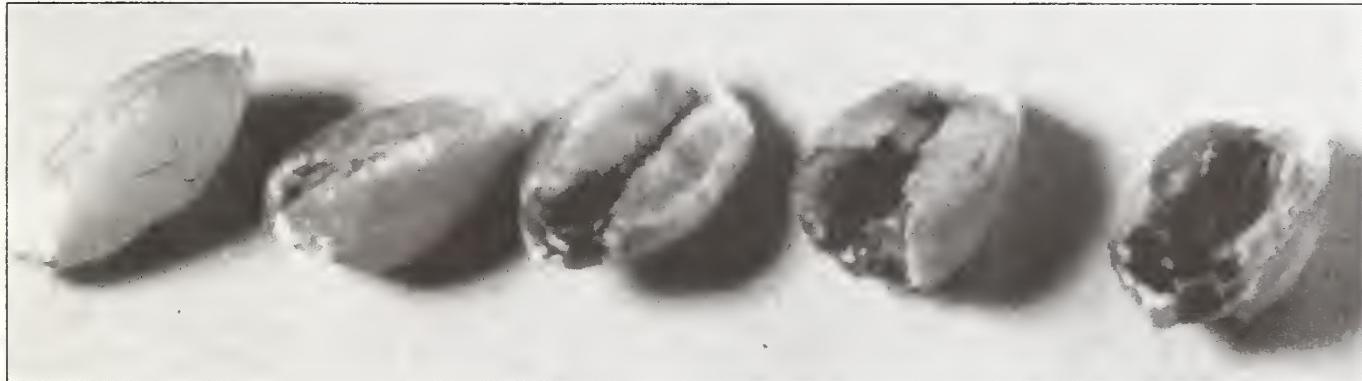
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Inside APHIS

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Task Force Team Joins States to Eradicate Karnal Bunt



APHIS PHOTO

By Beth Hulse, Public Affairs, LPA

On March 5, 1996, Arizona Department of Agriculture officials reported to APHIS what they thought might be a first for U.S. agriculture—an infestation of Karnal bunt. In the following days, it was confirmed that the fungal disease of wheat, durum wheat, and triticale (a hybrid of wheat and rye) had found its way into durum wheat seed in Southwestern Arizona.

Since that March 8 announcement, APHIS, teaming up with State regulatory officials, the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA), has been working around the clock to keep on top of this outbreak. Only 3 days after the announcement, APHIS officials had organized a rapid response

team to begin quarantine and survey work. This team, now termed the Karnal bunt task force, has been working steadily to trace back the sources of infected seed lots, identify all Karnal bunt-infected premises, disseminate up-to-date information to local wheat industry officials, and enforce regulatory actions.

"Cooperation among the growers, the States, and the wheat industry continues to be exceptional," says Fred Meyer, Karnal bunt project manager. "Their cooperation is essential to the success of the program."

Export Markets at Risk

Since United States is the world's leading exporter of wheat, accounting for one-third of world wheat exports and valued at \$4.9

billion in fiscal year 1995, PPQ and FAS officials immediately began negotiating with U.S. trading partners concerned about the outbreak, assuring that every precaution would be taken to protect U.S. wheat exports. So far, 38 countries have agreed to accept U.S. wheat shipments with either no changes to phytosanitary requirements or an additional declaration proposed by APHIS stating that the wheat shipment comes from an area free of Karnal bunt. APHIS' Trade Support Team and FAS officials are continuing to negotiate with other trading partners.

What exactly is Karnal bunt? It's best described as a fungal disease of wheat. The disease causes infected plants to produce (*See KARNAL BUNT on page 3*)

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In Silence Employees Recollect the Oklahoma Bombing



USDA PHOTO BY BOB NICHOLS

April 19 marked the 1-year anniversary of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, OK. At Riverdale, MD, employees attended a simple ceremony to honor the seven APHIS employees who lost their lives as well as employees who survived the explosion. The ceremony centered around the time of last year's bombing—10:02 a.m. Eastern Time—and was held outdoors around the dogwood tree that was planted last year. Administrator Lonnie King and Assistant Secretary Mike Dunn attended and placed a wreath next to the plaque honoring the seven. Here, three Riverdale employees pause for reflection.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

REAC employees were saddened to learn of the sudden death of M. Foster Mather. He died of a heart attack on Saturday, March 23, 1996. Foster was a REAC veterinary medical officer, working out of his home in Rochester, NY.

We will all miss "Dr." Foster Mather and remember him as a

good, kind, and humane colleague and friend.

Jerry DePoyer
Animal Care, REAC

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KARNAL BUNT, From Page 1

less grain than healthy plants. It also adversely affects the color, odor, and palatability of flour and other foodstuffs made of wheat if the wheat is heavily contaminated. Karnal bunt does not present a risk to human health. The fungus was first reported in 1931 in India and has since been found in Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Mexico.

Karnal bunt is caused by the smut fungus *Tilletia indica* (Mitra) Mundkur and is spread by spores. The spores can be carried on a variety of surfaces, including plants and plant parts, seeds, soil, elevators, buildings, farm equipment, tools, and even vehicles. These spores can remain viable for 4 to 5 years in the soil.

Actions in Four States

As of mid-April, infected wheat seed has been traced to premises in Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, and California. Currently, a quarantine, announced by Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman on March 26, is in place in the State of Arizona, four counties in New Mexico, two counties in Texas, and two counties in California. This quarantine restricts the interstate movement of regulated articles, such as wheat, conveyances used to move wheat, grain elevators used to store wheat, and milling products and byproducts.

On March 27, Glickman announced a declaration of emergency, transferring \$24.7 million from the Commodity Credit Corporation for fiscal year 1996 to help with Karnal bunt eradication and control activities. He also declared an extraordinary emergency for the states of Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, and California because of Karnal bunt. This declaration allows USDA to take a wide range of actions within states to control and eradicate the fungus, including providing compensation.



APHIS PHOTO BY STEVE POE

Task force member Rob Meyer from the Germplasm Quarantine Center at Beltsville, MD, examines a grain-sampling suspension to see if there are spores of Karnal bunt.

More recently, Secretary Glickman announced crop destruction orders in New Mexico and Texas for Karnal-bunt infected premises. Under these orders, farming operations that comply and plow their wheat crops down may be eligible to receive compensation. USDA's Chief Economist Office has recommended that compensation for these growers would be appropriate at the rate of \$275 an acre plus an additional \$25 an acre for plowing.

"The wheat that was destroyed in New Mexico and Texas was in early stages of development," says PPQ Deputy Administrator Don Husnik. "So plowdown was a feasible method of initiating eradication on these premises. By plowing under these crops, we prevent the further spread of Karnal bunt into noninfected areas of the United States and help protect our export markets," Husnik adds.

Plowdown is complete in New Mexico and Texas," says Meyer. "The growers there should be commended for their willingness to cooperate with program officials to eradicate Karnal bunt."

From the beginning, APHIS and Karnal bunt task force officials have been in constant contact with

wheat industry officials and growers affected by the fungus. Task force officials respond to more than 100 calls each day from industry officials, growers, interested citizens, and media.

Even though crop destruction for Karnal bunt has begun, PPQ anticipates it will be a long time before APHIS can forget about the disease. A national survey of elevators is planned for every county where wheat is produced, some 2,100 sites.

"The survey will be a cooperative effort between APHIS, the States, and industry to monitor our wheat exports and ensure they are healthy," says PPQ Chief Operations Officer Jerry Fowler. ♦

IS Employee Survives 40 Hours Afloat in Nicaraguan Bay

On Saturday March 9, 1996, IS technical manager Pedro Matos Ripoll left Managua, Nicaragua, on a 17-hour trip by land and water to La Cruz de Rio Grande, a town upriver from the Caribbean Coast of that country. He had planned to review activities of the Cooperative Screwworm Eradication Program and to give a 3-day training course to a brigade of program employees assigned to verify the absence of screwworm cases in that area.

He never reached his destination. Instead, Matos and five Nicaraguan inspectors spent about 40 hours in the water clinging to ropes tied around an empty fuel drum and praying their colleagues would find them before the sharks did or before they died of exposure.

Reached in Puerto Rico where he was recuperating with his family, Matos tells his story:

Laguna de Perlas

"Our party left the river port of Rama in three outboards to make the water leg of the trip. There are no roads in this part of Nicaragua, so all travel is done by boat. We motored down the Rio Escondido to Laguna de Perlas, an inland bay about 30 miles long by 8 miles wide. We had to travel the length of this bay to reach our destination. Because the boat I was traveling in was fast, we got to the village of Laguna de Perlas at the south end of the bay about 1 1/2 hours ahead of the others.

"In Orinoco, we visited with honorary inspectors about the program and met with the police to get their assessment of security in the area. (Armed groups and bandits are still a significant problem in parts of Nicaragua.) The police told my companions that there was danger in staying in the town because of some local troublemakers. By that time, the other boats were in sight, and my companions said we had time to reach the next little village on the bay before dark. To prevent an incident, we indicated to the arriving boats to continue ahead, and we followed them out into the bay.

Sudden Squall

"About 10 minutes into the bay, a storm blew up, and the seas grew rough. We passed the other

boats, and headed to the left. We saw a huge wave; our pilot speeded up and tried to meet it bow on. But the wave hit us abeam, and water came in and swamped the boat. We tried bailing, but we could not bail fast enough to level the boat. The stern went under, and the boat literally began to sink out from under us.

Holding On

"I remember holding on to the boat's anchor chain at first. The boat floated partially, stern down and bow out of the water, and we stayed with it until high wind and rough waves forced us away. One of the inspectors, Gonzalo Guerrero, snagged an empty 55-gallon fuel drum with its cover on. I had a new 12-foot coil of rope on my shoulder, but I have no memory of how it got there. Did I grab it as I left the boat? I don't know. We lashed the rope to the barrel, and there we stayed, clinging to the rope, for all Saturday night and all day Sunday.

"About mid-morning Sunday, I think it was, Salomon Baltodano and Lorenzo Perez left us to swim to shore and get help. After they swam all day, the tide turned and carried them back north, away from the town lights they saw at dusk, and further away from the shore. The remaining four of us stayed with the barrel all Sunday afternoon and night and Monday morning until searchers finally found us. Baltodano and Perez were found first; they had almost made it to a beach again when they were rescued Monday morning. Exhausted and almost incoherent, they managed to tell rescuers about where we were.

"By that time, I was unconscious a lot; my eyes were swollen shut, my whole face was swollen from the sun and salt, and my hands were bleeding from holding on to the rope. I must have had some strength left, because I kept holding on.

"I don't remember much about the rescue. I remember one of my



APHIS PHOTO

Before his life-threatening experience, IS technical manager Pedro Matos often traveled into the Nicaraguan countryside. Here Matos (white hat) teaches field inspectors how to collect samples.

companions saying, 'Take him first—he's the worst one.' I was the oldest one—the others are all in their 20's."

Rescue Efforts

While Matos and his companions were bobbing in the water, the crew of the second boat finally passed through the storm and reached the village of Orinoco after dark. They mounted flashlights as beacons, but the boat never arrived. At daybreak, they mounted a search. However, this area is sparsely populated, and the local people are quite poor. They have only dugout canoes, and there are no telephones or radios—no way to contact program headquarters in Managua.

The people began searching as best they could, and the program boat was sent to another village to hunt for a working telephone or radio and other boats. By Sunday afternoon, an inspector finally found a telephone and reached Leon, one of the larger Nicaraguan towns close to Managua. Program employees in Leon relayed a message to the U.S. Screwworm Program Director Alan Terrell in Managua. Terrell sent out a contract aircraft to search the area and called the program crisis group together.

According to Terrell, the program crisis group arrived at the central office about 3:30 p.m. on Sunday and did not disband until 10:00 p.m. on Monday evening.

Because much of what happens in Nicaragua does so more through personal connections than through organized structures, the crisis group began calling government officials, business people, military contacts, police contacts, friends, friends of friends, relatives, and relatives of relatives in an effort to find resources on the Caribbean Coast to intensify the search.

Expanding the Search

From the three or four boats searching on Sunday, the hunt expanded to seven or eight boats by Monday. Two program aircraft were flying search patterns over the bay as well. Walter Rice, APHIS administrative officer, joined the hunt, flying as a spotter in one of the planes. All the local inhabitants and officials around Laguna de Perlas joined the search, helping with everything from feeding searchers, to hunting for fuel (scarce in that area) for the outboards, to trying to establish reliable communications with Managua. As the search effort gained momentum, the first survivors were found drifting in their lifejackets about 10 a.m. Monday morning. By 11:30 a.m., all had been retrieved from the waters of the bay and taken to a local aid station in the village of Laguna de Perlas, which has a volunteer doctor, but no supplies—not even bed sheets.

Matos, who says he remembers almost nothing of the rescue or evacuation, was medevacked, along with his five Nicaraguan companions, by a rented military helicopter to the military hospital in Managua. The next day, Matos, who was suffering from severe pulmonary edema, or incomplete drowning syndrome, was evacuated via an emergency aircraft to Miami, FL. He was hospitalized for 9 days and then sent home to Puerto Rico for medical rest.

"Fortunately, they were all wearing life jackets," says Terrell, "and that saved their lives. Matos was wearing the jacket kind, which is comfortable, but, as it turned

out, not the safest design. His companions later placed an extra life preserver, the boxy kind, on him, and it kept his head out of the water when he was drifting in and out of consciousness."

A full accounting of the accident is not in, but Terrell says that the bay Laguna de Perlas has been subject this year to unusual north-easterly winds. These northerners bring rain squalls without warning, and because the bay is shallow, waves are whipped to a frenzy in minutes.

Local Cooperation

"The program inspectors on site, the local communities, and the Nicaraguan Air Force were all wonderfully cooperative," comments Terrell. "Without the willingness of the locals to assist in the search and without the helicopter evacuation and medical assistance, at least two of our employees likely would have died. Someone was watching out for these guys. The locals claim that no one ever survived 40 hours afloat in this bay."

In Puerto Rico, Matos is pleased to be getting a new pair of glasses to replace the ones he lost in the accident. He was also looking forward to returning to Nicaragua sometime in April and to replaying the experience with his colleagues. He hopes they can help him fill in the blanks in his recollections.

"Every day is a new day in Nicaragua," says Matos. "We'd never get anything done there if we were afraid to take risks. They come with the job." ♦

In San Francisco PPQ Employees Take Up Tomato Grading

By Dave Talpas and Dave Black, PPQ, San Francisco

Have you ever wondered what it takes for a tomato from Mexico to make it into the United States legally? Before December 1995, imported tomatoes underwent a series of Federal inspections. Now, there's only one inspection because the industry and two Federal agencies saw a way to reinvent the system.

They say necessity is the mother of invention, or, in this case, re-invention. Last year, Mexican tomatoes entering the United States at the Port of San Francisco were first inspected to make sure that they were free from exotic plant pests that could threaten American agriculture. APHIS PPQ officers performed this task. Then the tomatoes were graded by inspectors with the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) Fruit & Vegetable Division to ensure that they met import requirements and were legally marketable. APHIS inspections and AMS grading processes were sequential and time consuming.

As an initiative to improve customer service, AMS and PPQ have found a way to reduce the process to a single inspection. PPQ Officers at San Francisco International Airport (SFIA) now grade organically grown tomatoes from Mexico for AMS and perform APHIS inspections.

Will Sharron, a tomato importer, came up with the idea. "By the time both APHIS and AMS had completed their inspections," claims Sharron, "the tomatoes had degraded to the point that it was simply not profitable to import them."

Sharron petitioned AMS to find a way to make importation possible by expediting inspection and grading processes without jeopardizing American agriculture.

Bob Rosko, Regional Director of AMS' Fresh Products Branch, contacted PPQ Western Regional Director Jim Reynolds to explore the notion of having PPQ officers become certified to grade imported tomatoes.

"AMS, in cooperation with APHIS and State cooperators, has worked out a system for export certification of apples and pears over the last 15 years," says



APHIS PHOTO BY DICKINS CHUN

PPQ officers Georgia Goodwin and David Black get into their grading routine at the San Francisco Work Unit.

Rosko. "So, naturally, I thought, why not somehow involve PPQ even more in a cooperative venture with AMS on grading tomatoes coming through SFIA."

PPQ's Reynolds agreed. "It just makes perfect sense that our two agencies cooperate to streamline grading and inspection processes," Reynolds says. "Any time we can streamline Government, we will make our customers more satisfied."

APHIS and AMS entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Under the MOU signed last October, AMS provides training, equipment, and user fee collection; APHIS performs the grading of organically grown tomatoes imported at SFIA; and AMS reimburses APHIS for the work..

The tomato import season normally runs from October 10 through June 15. As of March 27, PPQ officers had completed 66 gradings. PPQ Officer Arsenio Mendoza, who leads his colleagues with 16 tomato gradings under his belt, boasts, "It's all in the way you look at them. Tomato grading gives officers a chance to do something different. In fact, it's quite interesting work."

To date, 11 officers have inspected and graded tomatoes.

"So far, so good," says PPQ Airport Manager Ed Yamaki. "Initially, the 11 officers were challenged by the complexity of the grading process. It is far more complicated than we expected. And we must complete grading certificates. Learning by trial and error, the 11 gradually got the hang of it. They deserve a lot of credit."

PPQ's Helene Wright, plant health director in California, sees more cooperation between AMS and APHIS in the future. "This innovative utilization of resources will serve as the basis for possible national implementation for other selected commodities."

For the American consumer buying produce from Mexico, the future looks bright, thanks to the dedication and determination of progressive employees in two USDA agencies working in San Francisco, CA. You may leave your heart in San Francisco, but tomatoes—well, they just have a way of passing right on through—inspected and graded, that is. ♦

New England Employees Collaborate on Aquaculture

In January 1996, employees from APHIS units in New England met at the VS area office in Sutton, MA, to discuss the agency's role in aquaculture and how they might collaborate on this and other projects in the area. Bill Smith, area veterinarian in charge of New England, hosted the meeting. Organizers included Patty Douglass, PPQ; Clem Dussault, REAC; and John Coakley, OPD.

"In Connecticut, the aquaculture industry is large, making up about 10 percent of all farm crops," says Coakley. "Oyster farming is big here, and Maine has a large salmonid industry. Service to aquaculture is part of the VS strategic plan, and ADC routinely helps farmers with aquaculture predators. We wanted to explore how we could better serve this emerging industry as one APHIS."

At the initial meeting, the group decided to develop and present a course entitled "Introduction to Aquaculture" this summer to all interested New England employees. A smaller group including veterinarians Noreen Roche, Lech Szkudlarek, Steve Ellis, and OPD's Coakley met again to develop a draft

agenda. Plans are for the course to run 2 days, to include an overview of both the aquaculture industry worldwide and New England aquaculture, and to cover topics such as diet, husbandry, and water quality of fish and shellfish. Local Extension employees will discuss how APHIS can help.

During the January meeting, participants also identified some areas where unit cooperation could ease the burden on any one unit and improve customer service. At the airports in Connecticut and Rhode Island, for example, PPQ and REAC could share personnel to perform airport inspections of dogs and cats. PPQ employees learned that VS has a contract veterinarian who travels to Maine to inspect animals. AVIC Smith suggested that while there she could perform inspection duties at PPQ border ports when needed.

"The group divided cross utilization into tasks that could be accomplished with no training, some training, or a lot of training," Coakley explains. "In the area of no training were such tasks as needing a second person from another unit to assist with bleed-

ing cattle or writing down ear tag numbers. On the other hand, PPQ and VS employees would need some training before, for example, they could inspect dogs and cats at airports. Some field inspections would require that employees have both on-the-job and classroom cross training before they could perform highly technical tasks."

Other cooperative areas included riding together and shadowing assignments for on-the-job training and familiarizing themselves with each other and their respective programs.

"We hope to keep building on our solid beginning at future meetings," Coakley says. "The vision launch workshops at Newburgh, NY, and Boston, MA, in April and May will provide us with further occasions to explore one-APHIS opportunities. Then in June, we are planning a followup meeting in Sutton, MA, to include more APHIS employees."

"By the time we offer our aquaculture course this summer, New England employees from APHIS units will have met and exchanged ideas on several occasions," Coakley says. ♦



Employees at the first one-APHIS meeting in the VS office in Sutton, MA, are (standing, from left) Lech Szkudlarek (VS, CT), Jennifer Lynch (ADC, MA), Jan Puzas (REAC, CT), Asia Elsbree (OPD, MD), Patty Douglass (PPQ, CT), John Coakley (OPD, CT), Bill Smith (VS, MA), Terry Goodman (PPQ, CT), Laura Henze (ADC, MA), Clem Dussault (REAC, VT), Steve Ellis (VS, ME), Noreen Roche (VS, RI). Seated, from left, Thomas Furbush (VS, MA), Robert Brady (VS, MA), Dave Kluesener (VS, NH).

APHIS PHOTO BY TRACEY JACOBSON

Longest Running Medfly Project to Close in June This Year

By Doug Hendrix, Media Officer, Cooperative Medfly Project

In June, Cooperative Medfly Project employees will finish a final-phase survey for Mediterranean fruit flies in the Los Angeles, CA, basin. If they find no flies—and every indication is that they will not—the longest running Medfly program in USDA history will come to a close. After 4 1/2 years of battling infestations of this agricultural pest, about 400 employees will go to new jobs or return to former ones. They leave behind a legacy of innovation and team approaches that were responsible for the accomplishment of their goals.

The project, which began in October 1991, was made up of employees in APHIS, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), and local county agricultural offices. Their job was to keep the Medfly from becoming established in California. It was no easy task. Medflies have spread throughout subtropical regions of the world from Africa and thrive on more than 250 fruits, nuts, and vegetables.

California has been plagued by repeated introductions of the pest since 1975. State/Federal authorities have always eradicated the outbreaks, mostly by using malathion bait applied from the ground or from the air and following up these applications with the release of sterilized flies around fly detection sites.

"The approach for the last 20 years has been to trap for introductions and, once they were discovered, to put eradication programs in place," said Fred Meyer, senior operational support officer with PPQ's Western Region. "These programs consisted of rapid response by State and Federal personnel and a request for emergency funding. In theory, emergency programs are short in duration, so personnel detailed to these activities return to their regular job assignments after a short time. In reality, many of the programs last a long time."

"We had a constant flux of short-term workers continually circulating through the eradication programs," Meyer continues. "These people were not at the programs long enough to acquire



APHIS PHOTO

Assistant program director John Stewart (center) demonstrates the fruit-tracking system in Ventura County to officials from Japan. PPQ's Mike Shannon (Operational Support) is on the extreme left.

expertise or to provide continuity. So in late 1993, PPQ management decided to detail Federal PPQ officers to the Project for long-term assignments."

The year 1993 proved to be an interesting time for the Cooperative Medfly Project. More than 400 wild Medflies were discovered in the Los Angeles basin. Large infestations were discovered in the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys, east and south central Los Angeles, and northern Orange County.

"It was apparent that we had a fly outbreak that was mushrooming and that could get entirely out of control," says Meyer. "We knew we needed a different approach to eradicate outbreaks from the Los Angeles basin."

International Panel

"In October of 1993, we convened an International Science Advisory Panel in Los Angeles to assess Medfly eradication activities in southern California," says Meyer. "Renowned entomologists from around the globe attended. A common theme expressed by these experts was that we should deal with the Los Angeles basin as one entire unit. Always before, we had geared eradication activities around individual fly-detection sites."

A Basin-Wide Approach

Californians know that the Medfly's threat to California's overall economy is real. U.C. Berkeley economist Jerry Siebert found that if key foreign trade partners were to embargo California's produce because of the Medfly, the immediate costs would be a decrease in the Gross State Product of \$1.4 billion and the elimination of at least 14,000 jobs. Related industries such as trucking, packing, food processing, retail, and shipping would also be affected.

With the State's largest industry at stake, Project officials elected to follow the recommendations of the international panel. On March 1, 1994, the project initiated its basin-wide sterile insect treatment (SIT) program.

"The SIT strategy was to treat all known infested areas in the basin with enough sterile Medflies long enough to eradicate the fly from these areas and to flood noninfested areas with sterile Medflies, to prevent new introductions from becoming established," says Meyer.

"The program was designed to blanket most of the Los Angeles basin with sterile Medflies and to span at least two periods when the population of the insects could be expected to be at its lowest level,

as in the winter months," Meyer explains.

Seven days a week, five aircraft released sterile Medflies uniformly over the Los Angeles basin at a ratio of more than 250,000 flies per square mile. The project released a minimum of 430 million sterile flies a week in a 1,464 square-mile area of the Los Angeles basin. In addition, the Project placed more than 12,000 traps in the basin checking for wild Medflies."

The SIT portion of the program lasted from March 1994 through February 1996. Project employees are continuing to enforce the quarantine and will survey for Medflies until the cycle for one full generation is complete with negative survey results.

Teambuilding

"To ensure the success of a basin-wide approach, we needed our workforce to understand each other and work together well," said PPQ's John Stewart, assistant director of the Cooperative Medfly Project. "The employees working on the Medfly Project represented great cultural diversity. We had workers from virtually every ethnic background."

"Under Fred's guidance, we gave team-building training for all project workers," Stewart continues. "One training experience was a team-building retreat to the San Bernardino mountains. This retreat consisted of a 'ropes' training course. Project workers traversed obstacles using mountain-climbing equipment. Course obstacles were designed to require assistance from a co-worker in order to conquer them. This team-building retreat really brought the management staff close together. We realized that in order to be successful, we had to rely on one another," adds Stewart.

Project employees also celebrated their diversity with monthly commemorative events and participation in educational seminars and festivals. "We established an Equal Employment Opportunity workforce diversity committee to further recognize our diversity," says Stewart. "Because this committee was composed of employees from all levels of the project, it fostered an open and caring environment. We feel this was another reason for our success."

Program Innovations

In addition to team training, project workers were encouraged to look for better ways to accomplish work activities. In the regulatory unit, for example, rather than regulate all produce establishments in the Los Angeles basin, "we assessed more closely the biological risk of an infestation spreading beyond recognized quarantine areas," said Vernon Harrington, regulatory section leader. "Produce establishments considered high risk are those on the perimeters of the existing boundaries of the quarantine area where people are most likely to move fruits and vegetables out of the quarantine area. Examples of high-risk establishments include farmers markets, packing houses, nurseries, and individual growers. We geared our efforts to deterring infested material from leaving the quarantined area by regularly visiting these establishments and by launching frequent public awareness campaigns."

Regulatory workers regularly staff informational booths at community events. We send people to farmers markets, garden shows, ethnic festivals (such as Cinco de Mayo) for the sole purpose of

interacting and educating the public about the potential impacts of Medfly," adds Harrington.

"Through the implementation of a risk-based approach, we were able to cut the regulatory staffing levels by nearly 50 percent. This cutback alone saved the Project more than \$1 million a year."

The sterile release unit has implemented many changes as well. For example, the unit used aircraft to release the sterile flies as opposed to releasing them from the ground with vehicles. "Aerial dispersion of sterile flies allowed us to cover very large areas in a short time," said Stuart Stein, section leader of the Sterile Insect Treatment facility. "We had five contract aircraft fly the basin daily releasing sterile Medflies over about 1,500 square miles."

"We haven't found wild flies now for almost 2 years," says Stein. "In 1994, seven wild Medflies were recovered from the Los Angeles basin. None were discovered in 1995, and none so far in 1996."

"To navigate through the busy Los Angeles airspace, we installed satellite navigational equipment on the release aircraft," Stein explains. "Global positioning technology

(See MEDFLY on page 14)



Stuart Stein, sterile release program coordinator, (right) checks a box of flies to make sure it's not too full. Loading flies into the drop box are Dieu Phung, PPQ seasonal crewmember, (left) and Fred Chung, (center) CDFA seasonal employee.

International Marketplace

This overview of major trade initiatives and accomplishments was compiled by Tom Cramer of the VS National Center for Import and Nick Gutierrez of PPQ's Phytosanitary Issues Management Team.

China—On March 8, 23 ostriches were exported to China from Pennsylvania via Hong Kong. This is the first of probably many shipments because the potential contract is for at least 1,000 ostriches. National Poultry Improvement Plan members and VS' Andy Rhorer are working with U.S. ostrich breeders in an attempt to meet import requirements of China, Barbados, and other countries relative to pullorum-typoid, avian mycoplasmosis, and *Salmonella enteritidis*. Apparently, there are potentially big markets for these birds in several countries.

Two VS veterinarians, Dan Harpster and Najam Faizi, recently returned from Beijing, China, where they discussed protocols for exporting U.S. livestock to China. They also held discussions on the scrapie program. Chinese officials plan to visit the United States in the near future to discuss further the importation of U.S. sheep germ plasm.

Brazil—Nick Gutierrez of PPQ's Phytosanitary Issues Management Team and Rick Yushimitsu of PPQ's Export Certification Unit met with their Brazilian counterparts in Riverdale, MD, in February to try to resolve various problems with U.S. agricultural exports to Brazil. The Brazilians offered to extend the waiver on U.S. wheat until November; we are asking that Brazil extend it until the end of the year to accommodate the 1996 wheat crop. Agreement was reached on other products, including grapes, pears, seeds, and stonefruit.

Brazil stopped issuing import permits for U.S. sheep in late 1995 because of scrapie. However, in February and March of this year, Brazil sent a veterinary pathologist to Riverdale, MD, where Harpster of VS' National Animal Health Programs (NAHP) briefed him on the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program. He then traveled to Ohio to observe flocks enrolled in the program and to Iowa to visit NVSL's Pathology

Section. Brazil is expected to follow his recommendations on whether to resume importing U.S. sheep.

Zimbabwe—Roger Perkins of VS' National Center for Import and Export (NCIE) traveled to Zimbabwe in April to inspect the embryo collection center that will be used in a project to import bovine embryos from that country.

Russia—The largest importer of U.S. poultry meat (estimated market worth \$700 million this year) announced an embargo on U.S. poultry effective March 16. In February, an APHIS delegation and representatives from the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Foreign Agricultural Service met with U.S. poultry associations and broiler groups and agreed on the creation of a collective disease reporting system that will provide the documentation that Russia requires. In March, the Office of the U.S. trade Representative and the Food Safety and Inspection Service negotiated terms for lifting the embargo on U.S. poultry meat.

European Union—The EU has requested that APHIS provide a list of breed registries that meet EU requirements for registration of sheep, goat, pig, horse, and cattle breeds produced in Europe so that U.S. livestock, semen, and embryos from these species are eligible for registration by European breed associations. Mark Dulin, IS assistant regional director in Brussels, Belgium, met with representatives from the U.S. industry to discuss the EU request. A list of the U.S. Breed Registry Associations is expected to be sent to the EU by May.

Mexico—PPQ and IS made significant progress on U.S. cherry exports at the NAFTA sanitary and phytosanitary meeting held in February in Mexico City, Mexico. Alex Thiermann, deputy administrator of IS, and PPQ's Nick Gutierrez from the Phytosanitary Issues Management Team negotiated the requirements. While the work plan for cherries must be implemented before the product can move, Mexico will not require preclearance.

Venezuela—For the first time, bovine embryos from a foot-and-mouth disease-infected country have been imported into the United States. VS' Roger Perkins of the NCIE staff went to Venezuela to oversee the importation of 140 embryos.

VS' Jerry Freier from the Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health is participating in a study sponsored by the National Institutes of Health to identify the mechanisms of the emergence of L-C epizootic strain of the Venezuela equine encephalomyelitis (VEE) virus in western Venezuela. The goal of this project is to develop a spectral classification mode using Landsat satellite imagery to predict the location of VEE vector habitat in areas where no information currently exists. The project is a collaboration between the Center for Tropical Diseases, the University of Texas, and the Institute of Tropical Zoology of the Central University of Venezuela.

Costa Rica—IS' Mark Knez, APHIS attaché for Costa Rica, and Peter Witherell from PPQ's Methods Development Center in Oxford, NC, certified the first hot-water mango treatment facility in Cañas, Guanacaste, Costa Rica.

Panama—Roger Perkins of NCIE has reported that the importation of a Brahma bull from Panama marks the first time that cattle have been imported from Panama.

France—VS's Stephen Weber traveled to France to work with the Office International des Epizooties on a computerized system that provides international access to the status of livestock disease in member countries.

Vietnam—U.S. livestock entered Vietnam for the first time ever with a shipment of 90 swine from Georgia. Last year in Hanoi, NCIE's Faizi negotiated the protocols that made these shipments possible.

Egypt—Importation of U.S. cattle was banned last year because of concerns about last summer's vesicular stomatitis outbreak in the Southwest. Now Egypt has

New IS Office in Lima Serves Both Peru and the Andes

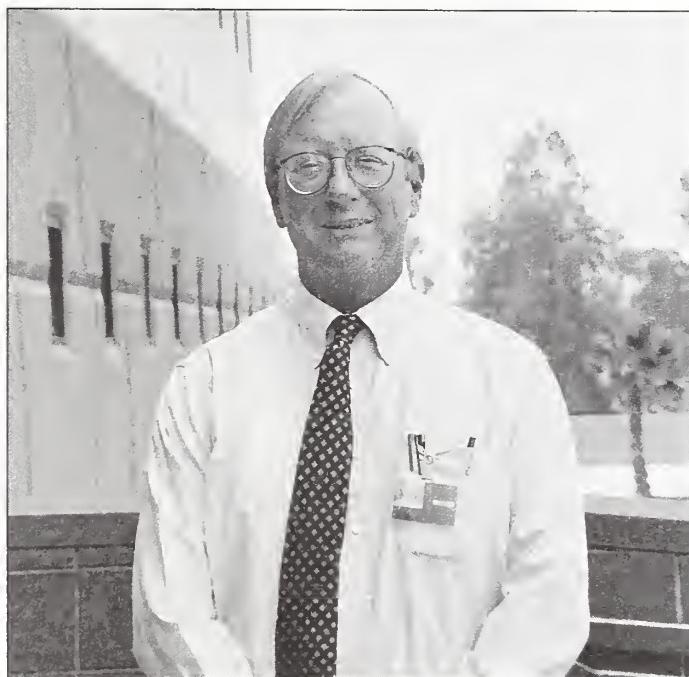
By Estela Bock, Public Affairs, LPA

When you buy a mango at the grocery store, do you ever wonder where it comes from? Well, a good number of mangoes are now coming from Peru after a hot-water treatment and inspection, thanks to an APHIS mango preclearance program in Northern Peru. Peru also exports grapes after a cold treatment.

Because of these and many other agricultural activities now underway in the Andean area, the Peruvian government has gladly welcomed the establishment of a new IS area office in Lima, Peru. This new APHIS area office is located inside the American Embassy in Avenida Encalada in an area known as Monterrico. To enter the building, one has to go through three security points. The embassy is surrounded by a 10-foot high wall and a walkway built few feet above ground that leads to the main entrance. The building is like a fortress—a little intimidating, yet Bill Snell's friendly welcome makes one feel at home in a minute.

Snell, the IS foreign service officer in charge of this office, has just the right charisma, friendly smile, and technical knowledge to make this new post effective and successful. Snell's knowledge of the language and his affection for the people are definite assets for the responsibility he has assumed.

"I arrived here just a month ago, and I am already extremely busy," says Snell during an interview held at his newly established office in Lima. "For example, last week I



APHIS PHOTO BY ESTELA BOCK

New IS Area Director Bill Snell stands in front of the U.S. Embassy, which houses the IS office in Peru.

was in Ica, Peru," he says. "A team of U.S. and Peruvian officials came to survey citrus crops. They were looking for Black Spot, a disease the team thought they might find here, but apparently, Peru has never had it. The week before last," he continues, "I went to Venezuela to assist in the development of an area free of South American Curcubit fruit fly."

Snell explains that he is in Lima to provide technical expertise for animal and plant health issues in the Andean region and that he is responsible not only for Peru, but also for six other countries in the region: Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guyana.

By providing key zoosanitary and phytosanitary information about the region to U.S. exporters,

Snell also enhances the sale of U.S. commodities to Peru and facilitates the entry of U.S. agricultural commodities into that country.

Snell plans to work with all seven countries in the establishment of pest-and-disease-free areas that fall within and across political boundaries. He also will assist in developing environmentally compatible solutions to pest and disease problems in the area.

APHIS already charges private-sector exporters for direct services it provides to them, such as exporters in the mango hot-water treatment program in Peru. In the near future, Snell plans to hire a national agricultural specialist, whose salary will also be paid by the private sector.

Snell explains that the APHIS presence in Peru will help countries in the region harmonize zoosanitary and phytosanitary standards mandated by GATT. Harmonization with international standards will ensure that exports from the United States will continue to receive equitable consideration for entry.

Snell's main reason for being in Lima, he says, is to promote U.S. agricultural exports, as well as to promote agricultural technology and products in Peru and other countries in the Andean Region.

When asked what he liked the most about being in Lima, Snell responded, "the people." And what did he like least? "The traffic and the way Peruvians drive," he says. All and all, he is getting to know his way around, and he is happy to be in Lima. ♦

lifted its ban, and VS' Faizi is helping ready a shipment for transport to Egypt in April.

Germany, Belgium—Twelve cattle from Germany and six cattle from Belgium were recently released from

their quarantine at the New York Animal Import Center. VS' Roger Perkins made the arrangements.

Peru—A project to import 450 camelids from Peru is underway. VS' A.C. Welch (New Jersey) and

Tim Falls (Hawaii) have been in Peru supervising pre-embarkation testing and quarantine. After completing the in-country protocols in late May, the animals will be transported to the Harry S Truman Animal Import Center for a 90-day quarantine. ♦

This Team's Priority Is Valuing People in One APHIS

By Rob Tanaka, IS, Region III (Asia and Pacific)

A group in APHIS is working to make sure the new one-APHIS organization values its people. Known as the "One-APHIS Team for Valuing People in the Workplace," some of its members were also part of the original Valuing People element group that participated in the Strategies Conference in May 1995.

During the Strategies Conference, the Valuing People strategy was eliminated. The employees supporting initiatives valuing people were encouraged to align with the Change Agenda, and some of the strategy's proposals were distributed among other strategies. Members of the original group, however, wanted to ensure that the concept of valuing people would survive as a theme of the new APHIS vision. Therefore, the One-APHIS Team has continued to meet regularly.

Members, who are located at sites around the country, include Jerry Coursey (OPD, Riverdale, MD), Clem Dussault (REAC, Chelsea, VT), Janis Garich (PPQ [NAAE], Farmington Hills, MI), Anna Grayson (CREC, Washington, DC), Melanie Nicol (OPD, Riverdale), Ray Nosbaum (M&B, Riverdale), Vic Ponte (ITS, Riverdale), Frieda Skaggs (IS, Riverdale), Paula Thompson (OPD, Ft. Collins, CO), Melonie Torillo (VS, Riverdale), Rochelle Woods (VS; Ithaca, NY), and me—I'm in Riverdale. Meetings have been via conference calls until March 1996 when the team met in person, many for the first time.

The objectives of the meeting were to (1) get to know each other through team-building, (2) document the team's purpose, and (3) look at the team's past accomplishments and future projects.

With the help of team member Coursey, the team conducted team-building exercises, including the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the Team-Review Survey, and brain-storming exercises. These exercises

showed that the team is extremely diverse in terms of experience, function, and personality. In other words, the team has potential for contributing a wide range of ideas, resources, and solutions.

The next step was to develop the team's own vision and strategy, including defining the team's concept of "one APHIS." For the team, one APHIS means that all employees are accountable for showing that what they do values the individual and the organization; that all employees are part of and focused on the vision as well as on the programs; and that employees contribute their views and know what happens with their input. (See the side bar for other essential one-APHIS characteristics.) The team then used these characteristics as goals. To achieve its goals, the team developed its mission—to support management decisions and Change-Agenda strategies that value people.

The team also came up with some strategies for supporting its mission. These strategies are to help align employees with the Change Agenda by supporting their concerns about valuing people; to ensure that valuing people in the workplace is incorporated throughout the Change Agenda; to promote and support local efforts of employees to

achieve one APHIS; and to reward employees for their efforts.

The team received encouragement and support from top management. Phyllis York (M&B), Sharon Coursey (OPD), and Sally McCammon (OA), all spent time visiting and consulting with the One-APHIS Team.

One APHIS

- Sharing expertise across unit lines
- Maintaining unit identity
- Sharing resources
- Consolidating support services
- Standardizing systems and processes
- Sharing leadership
- Partnering and teaming across unit lines
- Adopting and aligning with the APHIS vision
- Support of functionality
- Strength through diversity of perspectives and skills

One-APHIS team members have participated in a number of field and headquarters projects. In Louisiana, Kansas, and New England, they are helping to develop field positions or shared activities that cross unit lines. Members are working in

(See ONE APHIS on page 19)



USDA PHOTO BY BOB NICHOLS

Members of the One APHIS team for Valuing People in the Workplace discuss strategies for achieving their goals. Clockwise from the left are Rochelle Woods, Ray Nosbaum, Rob Tanaka, Anna Grayson, Jerry Coursey, Clem Dussault, Melanie Nicol, Paula Thompson. AMT members Sharon Corsey and Sally McCammon add their perspectives.

Era of Paper Forms Ends With Dawn of New Forms Software

By Joan Kunz and Jeri Perkins, ITS, Applications and Information Management

There's no doubt about it: we're all entrenched users of forms. Every purchase, requisition, training authorization, and shipment of goods is initiated with a form. An Information Technology Services (ITS) team, the Electronic Office Project, has been working in two locations, Ft. Collins, CO, and Riverdale, MD, to implement a standard electronic forms system in APHIS. The system puts an end to paper forms and marks the beginning of PC forms software.

Project team members include Rick Rogers, Sandy Hill, Regan Thomas, Sue Hairgrove, and Jeri Perkins in Fort Collins, and Cheryl Jenkins, Cheryl Groves, Cathy McDuffie, and Joan Kunz in Riverdale.

17 Forms

With the release of 17 administrative forms, the first phase of the Electronic Office Project is complete. Among the 17 forms are the AD 700, Procurement Request; the AD 202, Travel Authorization/Advance; and the SF 71, Application For Leave.

Secretaries, personnel specialists, administrative and office assistants who have been using the new system don't ever want to go back to filling out those forms manually. Anyone who has ever filled out a purchase request knows the time-consuming, frustrating experience involved, especially when initiators change their minds or mistakes must be corrected on these multi-part forms.

"Our vision of a paperless electronic office is becoming a reality!" says project leader Rick Rogers. By implementing a standard electronic forms system compatible throughout APHIS for all administrative processes, information can be entered once on the automated forms, then added to applicable databases, electronically routed, and electronically stored.

The ITS team is making these forms available to APHIS offices through Federal Elite Informs, the



APHIS PHOTO BY BRIAN TROUT

Electronic Office Project team member Sandy Hill (at keyboard) keys information into one of the 17 forms now available to offices electronically. Team members critiquing the process are, from left, Sue Hairgrove, Rick Rogers, and Jeri Perkins, all at Ft. Collins, CO.

Internet, file transfer protocol (FTP), E-mail, or diskettes.

Although the 17 forms are now available at the touch of a key, the process took time to develop. Team members spent months learning the Informs electronic forms software, completing the design of some of the forms, testing the fill-in parts of the forms, developing standard form design elements, and training the users.

Teamwork Across the Miles

"This project has proved that even though project team members are located in different geographic locations, we can work as a team," says Rogers. "We developed files on a shared drive that we could all access, and we communicated through E-mail and telephone conferences regularly."

Completion of the first phase allows administrative information to be electronically entered, printed, stored, and routed. Information

stored on a local database can be recalled and updated as needed.

Future phases include providing additional forms, as well as a system for shared access of data, forms management, and electronic archiving. A second phase will analyze information being electronically entered and stored, develop an efficient, integrated data structure to share and track the information, and provide statistical reporting capabilities. Phase III will address long-term information storage needs by providing an electronic means to store and archive information in electronic form that meets legal requirements and eliminates the need to store hard copy documents.

Contact any of the project team members if you have questions about using the forms on your PC. ♦

MEDFLY, From Page 9

accuracy. We also electronically documented the swath patterns flown, rate of insect dispersion, airspeed, and altitude. Entire flights could be logged for post-flight computer display or printout."

Camarillo Discovery

In the Fall of 1994, just as the basin-wide program was chugging along comfortably—Wham! Wild Medflies were discovered 60 miles north of Los Angeles in Ventura County, one of the State's largest growing areas.

Detection of two mated female Medflies on September 29, 1994, triggered initiation of an aerial malathion-bait treatment program in the city of Camarillo. Project personnel completed 15 aerial applications in a 16-square-mile treatment area between October 1994 and May 1995. In all, 66 adult Medflies were recovered from two areas in the Camarillo area. Aerial treatments occurred for two complete lifecycles, lasting nearly 8 months.

"Camarillo really tested our resolve," says Stewart. "We were fortunate in having a highly trained workforce in the Los Angeles basin. We immediately sent a cadre of these employees into the infested area."

"Within a few days of the initial outbreak, project workers had implemented a fruit-tracking system, sampled tons of fruit for the presence of larvae, and placed thousands of additional Medfly traps. Our foreign trading partners were relieved when they visited the site to view first-hand the thoroughness of our initial response," says Stewart.

"Ventura County is an \$850 million a year agricultural market," Stewart says. "If we had not been able to move quickly, the whole county could have been subject to quarantine restrictions, and the agricultural community could have lost hundreds of millions of dollars. Our quick action kept Project eradication costs to \$1.6 million for this area."

Public Awareness

The Los Angeles basin is home to more than 13 million people. Reaching these people through public relations and educational campaigns seemed an impossible task.. On the Medfly project, however, the agricultural industry got involved.



APHIS PHOTO BY CHRIS TEJEDA

After loading the drop box of sterile flies into a contract aircraft, Jorge Mercado (CDFA, left), hands an extra cooler of flies to Rufino Santos (CDFA, right), who pours them directly into the release machine. The contract pilot is behind Santos.

"California's agricultural industry organized educational taskforces in eleven major growing areas of California," says Larry Hawkins, public affairs specialist for APHIS's Western Region. "Called a Fruit Fly Action Cooperative Taskforce (FACT), each task force developed its mission and assigned responsibilities to industry employees. FACT members began meeting with representatives of city councils, civic organizations, schools, retirement centers and others. At community events, FACT members discussed the biology of the Medfly, how it is brought into the State, and what the public can do to prevent more introductions".

"A real advantage of the FACT structure is that local people were meeting with local citizens, governments and organizations," adds Hawkins.

Personnel at the Medfly Project were closely involved in the formation of these industry grassroots taskforces. Project staff regularly attended workshops and organizational meetings of these groups in their locales when they were forming. Likewise, media officers at the Medfly Project supplied

these taskforces with informational brochures, portable displays, slide-sets, and fact sheets, and worked closely with them.

Closing the Project

"An ironic consequence of any eradication program is that if you are successful in eradicating the target pest, you ultimately work yourself out of a job," says Stewart. "From 80 to 85 percent of our workforce consists of temporary, local employees who now must find new work. We have instituted a transition team to help them locate and prepare for another job."

The transition team has set up a career opportunities and employment outreach program. Activities and resources include resume instruction, interviewing techniques, computer and software training, job listings, and employee assistance counseling.

"We know we can't find everyone a job after the Medfly Project closes, but we're capitalizing on every opportunity to prepare employees for employment beyond the Project," says Stewart.

Medfly projects of the future may profit from research under develop-

On Payday Everybody Wins With Direct Deposit

By Mark Hall, Human Resources Operations, M&B

When payday arrives, employees can choose how they receive their salary payment—a paper check mailed to their home or an electronic deposit into their bank account.

Salaries received by direct deposit come through the Electronic Funds Transfer system. Delivery of money is faster for most people and costs the Government less than issuing a paper check. Employees use form SF-1199A to sign up for direct deposit.

Employees who wish to have a check sent to their home need to indicate the mailing address on the bottom half of an AD-349, Employee Address form. (The upper half of the form is used to designate a residence address, where most official mail will be sent.)

Statements of Earnings and Leave are mailed to each employee's residence address as designated on the AD-349. Employees should review their statements for accuracy every pay period but especially after they make a change in payments for benefits or other deductions, to be sure the changes have been made and are correct. Employees with direct deposit should check the accuracy of routing and account numbers when financial organizations change ownership or affiliation.

If employees receive overpayment, they are required to report

HRO's Leave and Compensation Team

Lori Bohall—(612) 370-2180

Marva Overton—(612) 370-2231

ADC—Eastern Region

M&B

PPQ—Southeastern Region

PPQ—Western Region

REAC

VS—Headquarters, Northern, and Southeast Regions

ADC—Headquarters and DWRC

BBEP

OPD

PPQ—Operational Support

PPQ—Northeast Region

VS—Central Region

Mark Hall—(612) 370-2160

ADC—Western Region

IS

LPA

PPQ—Central Region

PPD

VS—Western Region

it. The U.S. Comptroller General has ruled that "failure to note a significant unexplained increase in salary and promptly question appropriate officials about the amount renders the employee partially at fault, precluding waiver" of a bill for overpayment.

To correct nonpayment or to reissue payments, it can take 7-10 working days for an employee to receive a check but only 2-3 days for the employee's funds to be credited electronically through direct deposit.

The first point of contact for pay and leave matters for employees in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area is Debbie Rigden, Headquarters Customer Service, and her team at (202) 690-3012.

Field employees should contact a wage associate at Human Resources Operations (HRO) in Minneapolis. HRO has three wage associates who serve all of the Marketing and Regulatory Programs. The APHIS offices they serve are listed in the sidebar. ♦

ment at the present time. What may be the newest weapon against the Medfly is a compound that contains D&C red # 28 and yellow # 8—both registered separately with the Food and Drug Administration for use in soap, lipstick and antacids. "When eaten by flies exposed to sunlight," explains Meyers, "the dye blend oxidizes and attacks the flies' membrane tissues. "Preliminary results from lab tests in Hawaii show that Medflies that eat bait containing the Sure-dye® die within hours

after exposure to sunlight."

Another promising technology is a Temperature Sensitive Lethal (TSL) treatment that would allow rearing labs to produce only male adult Medflies. Males are the important part of a release program because sterile males mate with wild females. (Now, labs rear both males and females, and sterile females compete with wild females for amorous males' attention.)

"If you use a male-only strain, you won't have ovipositional stings to host fruits as is the case when you're releasing both male and female sterile flies," says Meyer. "Production costs would also be lower for a male-only strain. In the

absence of sterile females, sterile males would not remain near the release site to mate mainly with sterile females. Rather, they would disperse in search of wild females and compete more effectively with wild males."

Clearly, an innovative spirit combined with a diverse workforce trained in teamwork was responsible for the success of the present project. After the goodbyes are over, employees will take memories of their successes with them into other work. ♦

Inspection Services Re-engineer Passenger Processing

A year ago, a group of PPQ Agricultural Quarantine Inspection employees began working cooperatively with their fellow Federal Inspection Service (FIS) employees in Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the U.S. Customs Service (USCS) to re-engineer the primary inspection process. This process is the most visible and critical element of passenger inspection for all FIS, INS, USCS, or APHIS inspectors screen overseas passengers and their baggage and decide whether to allow their entry into the United States or to conduct more detailed inspections.

Initially, FIS conducted a 90-day review of the passenger inspection process under the aegis of Vice President Gore's National Performance Review (NPR), whose goal is to reinvent Government so it works smarter and provides better customer service. Last August, the group, including PPQ-NPR coordinator Sonia Dabulis and nine other PPQ employees, reported their proposals to NPR.

"The proposals in the NPR report were generated by three multi-agency teams comprised of union members, field managers, and headquarters representatives of FIS and a headquarters representative from the State Department," explains Dabulis. Separate teams worked on the Northern border, international airports, or the Southern border.

"We developed 93 recommendations—44 for the airports, 28 for the Southern border, and 21 for the Northern Border," continues Dabulis. A number of recommendations applied to all three pathways into the country. These are traffic segmentation, expanded use of new technology, educating the traveler, paperwork reduction, multi-agency training, wider access to data, and applying selectivity."

Phase II of this project is now underway. Ten ports of entry (see side bar) have become pilot sites for testing these passenger processing recommendations. At Miami International Airport, an NPR reinvention laboratory tests specific local passenger processing problems as well as national recommendations in the NPR report. At each of the 10 pilot sites, a Port Quality Improvement Committee (PQIC) develops,

manages, and measures tests of the passenger processing recommendations. Each PQIC (pronounced "P-quick") is comprised of two managers and two union representatives from each of the FIS. Other members are included, where appropriate; for example, an airport manager and airlines representatives would be on airport PQIC's, and a General Services Administration (GSA) representative would be on PQIC's at the border ports because GSA is responsible for those facilities. If State Department consulate representatives are available, they are invited to PQIC membership.

These FIS reinvention efforts are also supportive of Vice President Gore's Vanguard initiative. This initiative directs 11 Government agencies that have direct contact with the public to deliver more efficient service. FIS has made a commitment (Vanguard promise) to team up with industry to improve the accepted standard of processing passengers at every major international airport within 45 minutes; to develop similar standards for land border crossings, and to share technology to strengthen enforcement. To meet the Vanguard promise, FIS has folded five additional airports into the national NPR project. (See sidebar.)

Each of the ports is testing certain passenger processing recommendations that came out of the NPR 90-day review, adapting them to their unique situations. Here are some of their recent activities:

Boston

The Boston PQIC recently surveyed 100 passengers at random every day for 2 weeks to learn how knowledgeable customers are about FIS regulations. Before going through INS clearance, these passengers were asked to describe the passenger inspection process; to state their duty exemption; to say if they could bring in small amounts of fruit for their own consumption; to say if items purchased in duty-free shops were exempt from declaration; and to state if they knew how to fill out a U.S. Customs Declaration. At this writing, results are being tallied.

10 Pilot Sites

Miami International Airport
Houston Intercontinental
Airport
Los Angeles International
Airport
Boston's Logan International
Airport
Nogales, AZ
San Ysidro, CA
Brownsville, TX
Blaine, WA
Buffalo, NY
Champlain, NY

Five New Sites

JFK International Airport, NY;
Newark International Airport,
NJ;
O'Hare International Airport,
IL;
Dulles International Airport,
VA; and
Dallas/Ft. Worth Interna-
tional Airport, TX.

The committee is considering further a suggestion to assign knowledgeable FIS employees to the departure lounges where they can advise passengers of regulations and answer their questions.

Los Angeles

At this port, a large PQIC works out the scope, vision, and objectives of recommendations; a subgroup, each sponsored by a PQIC member, carries out each recommendation. In April the port has been testing two of the recommendations—special dedicated queues and self-declaration lanes.

Houston

The Houston PQIC has distributed information on the project to local Congressional staff. It is developing surveys for passengers and airline representatives. It is planning on a press event and an article in the Houston Chronicle's business section. A workgroup designed a survey to measure concerns of INS, USCS, and APHIS employees working in FIS areas. The survey was distributed to 97 employees, and results compiled. According to PQIC manager Carl Hatchett of APHIS, 60 percent of

FIS respondents say the language barrier is a problem; 68 percent say city and airline employees are helpful; 58 percent say passengers are prepared; and 74 percent say passengers do not get enough informational material. The most time-consuming problem for FIS respondents (80 percent) is having unprepared passengers.

Nogales

A Nogales FIS committee already existed before the current NPR project. Under its new charge, the committee has completed a report on a recommendation for improved lighting at the port. Using GSA standards, they measured existing lighting with light meters and surveyed different types of lighting and placement for maximum effect. Once GSA installs the lights, the group will retest to measure results.

Brownsville

Three officers from each FIS comprise a core PQIC at Brownsville. The group has developed the objectives and goals for all recommendations and set up a work room complete with work table, chairs, telephone, and access to copy machine and fax. They have requested to work outside working hours on the project. To prevent backup at peak hours along the two bridges in Brownsville, PPQ inspectors walk along the pedestrian lanes, checking to make sure everyone has proper identification and other

USCS and INS documents. "In our port vision, APHIS is an equal partner with USCS and INS," says Ron Olivarez, union representative. "When our tests start in June, we plan to work with the other FIS agencies to realize our vision."

San Ysidro

For the recommendation on segmentation, the San Ysidro PQIC is testing high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes. These lanes are used by travelers who know the inspection process and are prepared for entry. "A side benefit," comments PPQ Assistant Port Director Blaine Call, "is that more people are coming through the port in fewer cars." The port has also segmented out travelers coming through for special events, such as the Padres baseball games. Because these vehicles move quickly through the entry process, the PQIC felt that FIS employees could spend their time more effectively processing traffic of greater risk.

Buffalo

The committee in Buffalo plans to use pre-processing of travelers and transponder-equipped commuter lanes. For a fee, pre-processed travelers can receive a transponder that they will attach to their vehicles. "Each time a transponder-equipped vehicle approaches the border," explains PPQ's Jackie Klahn, chair of the PQIC, "a computer will scan the transponder and display informa-

tion about the approved occupants and their vehicles to FIS officers in the inspection booth. If there are inconsistencies between what the inspectors see and the computerized information, the vehicles will be referred to secondary inspection. Otherwise, these travelers will pass through the border with only a brief pause."

Champlain

Individual PQIC members at the port of Champlain volunteered to head up work on each recommendation. These "team leaders" in turn become working members of other groups. The port, which is 50 miles from Montreal, has developed bilingual leaflets to alert French-speaking Canadians and English-speaking travelers to changes in traffic patterns.

Two loop radio stations are scheduled to start operating this spring. "Passengers in vehicles about 5 miles from the border can tune their radios to a French or English station and hear prerecorded messages advising them which lanes to use and which documents to have ready," explains Charles Emery, APHIS PQIC manager at Champlain. "Each Service worked on its part of the presentation." PQIC members also are gathering data on seizures and refusals and are timing the primary inspection process.

Blaine

In April, the PQIC in Blaine held a town hall meeting with local Congressional staffers and all Federal border agencies. Canadian Customs also attended. The British Columbia, Canada, Highway Department allowed FIS to use a reader-board type sign located on Highway 99 in April. The port is drafting an FIS pamphlet, "What to Expect When You Arrive at the Primary Booth," aimed at the traveler. The port is in the process of purchasing a 10-watt radio transmitter so the three agencies can broadcast their messages to travelers over an informational channel. The committee is looking into including Canadian Customs and Immigration in the radio messages. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY YVONNE FRANK

PPQ Aide Brad Vinish (left) and USC Inspector Jon Dallas search a randomly selected vehicle at the U.S.-Canadian border in Blaine, WA.

Bea Smith, PPQ, Northeastern Region, contributed to this report.

Team Designs a System for Resolving Workplace Conflict

For the past year, a group of employees from all program areas in headquarters and the field has worked quietly behind the scenes and in a reinvention laboratory to develop a Conflict Prevention and Resolution (CPR) Program. The effort began last September with the formation of a design group of 25 employees tasked with the development of a system that APHIS employees could use to resolve workplace conflict.

The APHIS Design Team, headed by project leader Kathy Trickey, OPD, believed that employees should have a place to take conflicts or be able to learn how to resolve conflicts with others in a way that would strengthen rather than hurt relationships.

"Conflict in the workplace is increasing," says Terry Taylor, Area Veterinarian in Charge at Richmond, VA, who was on the design team. "We must take advantage of any program created to diffuse conflict, and, at the same time, protect morale and increase productivity."

Team members researched several approaches, including peer-to-peer counseling, peer-panel review, 1-800-VENTING, and mediation. The group also discovered that several conflict-resolution activities already were going on as part of the APHIS Vision and

change agenda, and these activities supported the intentions of the CPR program. For example, in the change agenda item Team-Based Organization, as well as in diversity and intercultural communication training developed by OPD are components that deal with conflict management. The group made an effort to link these existing activities more directly to the CPR program effort.

"Conflict is an inevitable part of work and life," says Sheila Clemons, champion and coordinator for the CPR program. Clemons, who has been detailed to OPD from M&B's Human Resources Division to implement the program, believes that the CPR program should build individual capacity as well as supportive systems and services for employees to access. "We hope to increase people's ability to deal openly with conflict and decrease the stress, anxiety and loss of productivity that occur when conflict is not dealt with productively," Clemons says. Elly Cleaver, from VS's Resource Management staff, has also been detailed to the program. Cleaver and Clemons are the program's full-time mediators.

One of the design group's approaches, which has been accepted and funded, is the implementation of a mediation program. The mediation program

will be phased in two parts. The first part involves selecting and training collateral duty mediators. An "interest announcement" seeking nominations from APHIS employees wishing to serve as collateral duty mediators closed on May 3. Candidates had to express their interest, get supervisory approval, and submit two references. A review panel will select up to 12 employees based on their references and experience. Those selected will serve employees in the Washington, DC, metroplex.

In the second stage, external mediators contracted from private industry or borrowed from other agencies will serve pilot areas at field sites. "We will select three to four pilot sites," Clemons explains, "and any APHIS employee in and around that pilot site will be able to solicit the assistance of an external mediator. There is the potential to have agency collateral duty mediators in the field also," Clemons adds.

Clemons stresses that the program is not intended to replace any formal system that employees have at their discretion. Rather, CPR is intended as a tool for maintaining a healthy workplace. Clemons and others working on the program also will monitor and evaluate the pilots to see if they are achieving the program objectives. ♦

Congratulations!

... to ADC's George Graves, Nancy Cowan, Beverly Burrow, Jeanne Anne Hubbard, and Philip Robinson of the ADC Area Office in Oklahoma City, OK, for their Special Achievement Award from the Safety and Health Council. The award was for responding to the needs of fellow employees whose lives were altered forever by the bombing of the A.P. Murrah Federal Building. The employees in this office provided space, equipment, supplies, and above all else, human compassion to affected employees and to employees coming in to lend their support.

... to PPQ's Milton Haack of Ceiba, Puerto Rico, for his Special Achievement Award for 1995. Haack worked tirelessly to coordinate assistance and support to his fellow employees affected by Hurricane Marilyn.

... to PPQ's Christine Grose of Philadelphia, PA, for receiving a Special Achievement Award. Ms. Grose responded to a child passenger whose hand was caught in a baggage inspection conveyor belt. Through her actions, the child's limb was saved.

... to VS' Juan A. Garza of Brownsville, TX, for performing an act meriting a Special Achievement

Award. While on duty, Garza came upon a crime scene and administered aid to the victim.

... to VS' Nancy J. Roberts of the Oklahoma City, OK, for her award as Safety and Health Employee of the Year. Roberts made outstanding contributions to further a safe workplace at her office, her region, and all of VS.

... to VS' Rube Harrington and the VS Central Region for receiving the Administrator's Award, which goes to the program activity making the most outstanding contributions to the agency Safety and Health Program. The Central Region has consistently

Alumni Organization

From around the country, employees, retirees, and former employees now participate via conference call in meetings of the APHIS Alumni Organization (AAO). For the last two months, participants sat in from Riverdale, MD; Lake Forest, CA; Moorestown, NJ; Sacramento, CA; Atlanta GA; and Howell, MI.

At the March meeting, AAO held its election of officers. President Harry Mussman, Vice President Frank Mulhern, Treasurer Rosemary Stanko, Executive Secretary John Kennedy, and At-large member Scot Campbell assumed their new offices at the April meeting.

PPQ Northeastern Regional Director Chuck Schwalbe reported that PPQ is organizing regional response teams trained for rapid deployment to problem areas. The Northeast team has retirees as members; these retirees participate with full-time staff members. Schwalbe reported that the regional directors of other programs are also proposing to develop a response capacity; he is suggesting that managers have retirees on each team. Energetic retirees should come forward and assist

with this effort. Material from the February AAO meeting was distributed to the 19 State Plant Health Directors, so they can help solicit leadership at the State level.

AAO member John Kennedy has developed an instrument for compiling a data base of AAO expertise. The APHIS Alumni Short-Term Roster is an excellent way to let people in APHIS know about the AAO. Copies were mailed to all AAO members. Employee Terry Hall, (202-720-6544; Rm OOO9 South Building, 14th and Independence Ave, Washington, DC 20250) is handling distribution of materials of interest to AAO members. Contact Hall if you have something to include.

At the April meeting, Vice President Mulhern reported on the bovine spongeform encephalopathy (BSE) media coverage and recalled our eradication program in the 1950's. Mulhern said that former agency actions and foresight are responsible for the safe position we are in today. "Those actions taken years ago have benefitted the American consumer for over 40 years and have put us in an enviable position today," Mulhern

commented. He believes AAO members can assist APHIS by sharing the history of prior BSE efforts. Jim Hourigan, who was at Mission, TX, and those who helped him there, would be good resources. AAO member Larry Slagle remarked that current institutional knowledge may not include those early efforts. He suggested writing an article on early efforts on BSE for publication and dissemination.

President Mussman reported that as a result of the AAO meeting with the APHIS management Team on March 14, a joint letter will go out to employees, AAO members, and others about the AAO and its value to the organization. The letter will be cosigned by Administrator Lonnie King and AAO President Mussman.

At the March 14 meeting, the agency agreed to make available office support and space in various States for AAO members. These offices will have a current employee designated as the AAO contact. This person will make sure alumni have access to the office, share information, and help them carry out activities at the State level. ♦

been a leader in safety and health, with all levels of employees contributing to further a safe working environment.

... to **PPQ's Port of Los Angeles, CA**, for receiving the 1995 Safety and Health Work-Unit-of-the-Year Award for work units with more than 50 employees. This is the third time the unit has received this award.

... to the **ADC Iowa-Missouri-Illinois office** for receiving Safety and Health's Work-Unit-of-the-Year Award for work units with less than 50 employees.

... to **Annella Isom** of VS' Arlington, TX, office for her award as Collateral Duty Safety and Health Officer of the Year for 1995. Isom was selected from her peers on the basis of her outstanding efforts in defensive driver training, HIV/AIDS information in the work-

place, and her exemplary efforts in aiding her fellow employees in the aftermath of the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building.

... to **VS' Joseph Coyle** of Brady, Nebraska, for his award as Defensive Driver of the Year for 1995. Coyle has an excellent on-duty driving record through many adverse circumstances and promotes safety to others through speech and personal example. ♦

ONE APHIS, From Page 12

outplacement and relocation activities, including regional restructuring. They have provided a link with agency initiatives, including workforce diversity, equal employment opportunity, work and family life, and the APHIS vision. Some members helped get approval for field use of

cellular phones; others are helping develop a skills database. In many cases, the team is able to get the right people to communicate with each other. In other cases, the team provides hands-on help. The team has dedicated itself to continue to provide support for these and similar projects.

For more information on the One-APHIS Team, please contact any of the team members. We have provided their unit affiliations only to facilitate contact. After all, we are all one APHIS! ♦

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